

SEVEN DAYS



20/20 HINDSIGHT

A look back on two decades of Vermont news, views and culture

What the heck happened?

One minute Pamela Palston and I were reporters at *Max*, a little off-arts weekly we'd created, writing for the new means to do our jobs. Now we find ourselves looking back over 20 years of the newspaper we own, which is more one, a first issue.

universal of its kind in the country. Seven Days is thriving in a media environment that has become less like *ABC's President's Men* and more like *The Evening News*.

In some ways, publishing *Seven Days* has been easier than we

experts: "We've had opportunities to diversify and grow in a small market. Our guest staff have found and delivered interesting content and made it look good — first in black-and-white newspaper and now in full color — on almost every platform imaginable. Readers and advertisers have acknowledged our efforts and rewarded us with their business and attention. Building that trust is something only a few lucky Westmonte printers get to experience."

But running *Seven Days* has also been challenging — in ways we never could have imagined in 1991, when our writers, all freelancers, still turned in their stories on floppy disks. Technology has enriched our work and made it more accessible, but it's also upended many newspapers — and kept me awake countless nights. It has forced all of us in the media industry to innovate. Some things stick, others don't. Figuring out what *world* work in our market has only deepened our appreciation for its complexity.

We couldn't have predicted that *Seven Days* would grow from 28 pages a week to more than four times that. Or that we would add a parenting magazine, dining and student guides, a biweekly tourist quarterly and a full-time video journalist. To say nothing of the events — singles parties, homebuyer seminars, Daymas awards, Tech Jam and Winnetux Restaurant Week.

Seven Days even produced a video game. Until 2013, I'd never played one.

Parsons and I got into this business to publish a lively local weekly with good writing and design. That we're producing as much more of it now hasn't diminished that commitment.

At the very least, we've tried to choose our words carefully, place them where they belong and spell them correctly. But the greater goal has been to move you — to understand, admire, fear, act on, whatever — whether it's Paul Heintz's campaigning coverage or the Free Will Astrology column, Ken Paster's exposé of prostitution in Vermont's Arctic "massage parlors" or Alice Levitt's restaurant reviews.

Our goal for the next 10 years? Pretty much what we outlined on our very first issue: "to provide a weekly mix of articles about people, places and things worth doing, as well as news — with a twist — reviews, opinion, entertainment and up to the minute listings. In short, the definitive word on life in Vermont."

Now, with the Web and social media, we aim to entertain and inform you truly seven days a week. And by "we," I mean all of our 60-plus employees. Fortunately, it's not just one cool Panda's answer.

PAULA RUTLY
PUBLISHER/EDITOR



20 YEARS...



AAW—Association of Alternative Newsweeklies
 NENPA—New England Newspaper & Press Association
 PMA—Pac-Man Media Association
 WPA—We're Not Just About News

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A longer version of the Seven Days history — with three times as many timeline points — is online at sevendaysvt.com. Check it out—you might be in it.

NOVEMBER 8: Funds Finally
in Sight at Black Talk: First Book
Growth also Gaining, according to
GreenDays office. The super-
publisher's first two books, the
history of black sports, "I approach
my work with a Muslim, very con-
scious, heart in a morning. I've
happily, has a lot of for you
and a beautiful, like 100."



JANUARY 17
Sevens Day:
Launches its
game lands
with 14-oz. Citrus
Game preparation.
It lasts every
Wednesday in gift
for 10 weeks at
least one. Not only

SEPTEMBER 9
The first 29 pages of *Ken Kesey's* include an essay by Peter France, a short story excerpt by William S. Burroughs, and a piece surely headlined "The Paris Home II: The streets of London." The book's last, longer

SEPTEMBER 12
Seven Days gets
an era 1,000 years
celebrated
together, not
and a different
edition. The first
of more than
1,000 editions is
better read
than best.

DICTIONARY ■ The online literary dictionary, *Forgetting Braselattary*, is meant to leave a bit of hope for its apocalyptic fans: It's a fiction book. Calamound and Maple Hot Wind's lovely Shelly Smith predicts, "The word 'Vennard' may mean a journey you'll take to the end of the world." Peter Vignoli's lovely *Deadly* is by the same name.



NOVEMBER 12
Deter-fingering paws the
conspiracy? Billy the Kid
Newcomer David Duchovny
here in a poignant chap-chap
in 'L.A. Law'! The burner
this time star in high school
football star is accused
and later convicted of
murdering his Newcomer's
best pal, who winds
up dead. www.fox.com

DECEMBER 22
 Two Painters share
 story Times Run
 to Euthanasia
 appears in the
 first Winter
 issue of issue
 A few months
 later it runs
 the paper is
 printing from
 December 22

JANUARY 26 In "Winning Ticket," Paula Gauding was awarded a prize that makes her the oldest lottery winner in the world. She is 90 years old and lives in a nursing home. She won the prize by buying a ticket for \$1.00. She is the only person in the world to win the prize by buying a ticket for \$1.00. She is the only person in the world to win the prize by buying a ticket for \$1.00.



TWENTY REASONS WE'RE STILL HERE

The last 20 years haven't been so great for many newspapers around the country. Some publications are shadows of their former selves. Others, like the all-weekly Boston Phoenix, have vanished altogether. So why is Seven Days still fat and happy? We came up with a few possible explanations:

- 1 Seven Days was "locavore" before there was a precious term for it.
- 2 It's free—you can thank our advertisers for that.
- 3 In Vermont, our circulation drivers are more reliable than the internet.
- 4 You can't wrap presents, make mulch or start a fire with Facebook.
- 5 iGays. Maybe this week night?
- 6 We actually live here.
- 7 You can't do the Seven Days crossword online.
- 8 Unlike other local news outlets, we get to drop the F-bomb. Fuck yeah!
- 9 We really, really try to eliminate typos.
- 10 Who else would you nervously ask about your penis size if not for Lola, Mistress Maize and Athena?



- 11 It's nice looking! Admit it—you even read the ads.
- 12 For Seven Days, serious word play is not an oxymoron.
- 13 Vermont is far more sophisticated than our risky-deck population would suggest.
- 14 Two words: job ads.
- 15 The fearless Peter Freyre launched our news section. See page 5.
- 16 You need something to read in the bathroom.
- 17 How else would you know what to do this weekend?
- 18 We bust our asses—no squat machine required.
- 19 It's not all work. Think Heidi Greis, Art Hop and the Big Lebowski.
- 20 YOU! Thanks for picking up the paper, buying ads, sending letters, get photos, suggesting stories, voting for the Gayexes and giving us so much to write about for all these years.



20 YEARS...



HOW MANY SEVEN DAYZERS DOES IT TAKE...

Few brave staffers helped to launch *Seven Days* in September 1995. LARRY ENCK was designed the paper. MAURICE STAFFORD was the "front-desk person" in our subterranean Church Street office, in charge of reception, classifieds, circulation and whatever else came up. CLAYE VANDER compiled the calendar. And the incomprehensible WORKERS sold so many ads to local businesses that the first issue was 28 pages. Even as a startup, the company never had a cash-flow problem.

By Christmas, we'd picked up news columnist PETER FREEMAN, photographer MATTHEW THORSEN, designers SAMANTHA LANEY and KATY GORDON and another reluctant but effective salesperson BARBARA FLEMING. A year and a half later came MICHELLE BOWEN, a consummate professional salesperson who works for us to this day.

The first crew of delivery drivers — who on Wednesdays pick up and drop off thousands of papers in every direction within an hour and a half of Burlington (see page 12) — included NUT MICHAEL, and HARRY APPLEGATE both still work for us and, in addition to *Seven Days*, distribute *7 Nights*, *What's Good* and our parenting publication, *Baby 77*.

Over the years, dozens of remarkable people have lent their talents to *Seven Days*. Some of them, such as art director EMMY SWANSON and staff writer MARGARET, have worked with us for much of their adult lives. American publishers *Entrepreneur*, *Entrepreneur* and *Entrepreneur* have 45 years among them, and none is older than 42.

Others, such as senior sales representative MARGARET and special publications manager CARRIE-ANNE, left the company and came back.

In such continuity and hard work to "serve" our community. To make a newspaper from scratch every week, dozens of working parts have to come together. The reporting, the editing, the photography, the calendar listings, design, proofreading. And then there's the digital side — updating all that content to the web, pushing it out via apps and email newsletters and making sure



FIRST ANNIVERSARY STAFF PHOTO

Top row: Jeff, Barbara, probably Sally, Graham, Larry, Enck, Rick. Second row: Margaret, Barbara, Pamela, Patricia. Paula, Emily, Jack, Warren, Graham, Ken, Kenneth, Bud, Dave, Tim, Mike.

people see it on Facebook. To say nothing of finding interesting stories in the first place, and selling the ads to enable us to pay for everything.

Not everyone drives in a deadline-driven work environment; others embrace the pace and discover skills they didn't know they had. But all of the people listed on pages 8 and 9 — both staffers and freelancers — contributed in some way to making *Seven Days* the media company that it is today. For their labor and loyalty, we are eternally grateful.

PAULA RUDYLT

20 YEARS...



Good Eye

Seven Days photographer Matthew Thorsen gets the picture

BY DANIELA POLSTON

Mattress Thomson came into the *Seven Days* fold shortly after we started the paper. His first photo was of studio producer Joe Riga, in the October 25, 1985 issue. For the first few years, his black-and-white images, with dramatic borders created in the darkroom, defined the paper's arty look. As time passed, his photos reflected a picture-taking style change: from analog film to digital. Goodbye, darkroom. Hello, *Surferia* curve.

Matt acknowledges grappling with digital cameras — which in the beginning were “not very good” — and a whole new way to process images. In addition, Seven Days gradually evolved from an arts-and-culture paper to one with an increasing number of hard news stories. Photojournalism was a new world, too, for this photographer best known for his carefully composed portraits.

Over time, the photos in *Seven Days* reflected not just an evolution in image technology but the development of a uniquely talented photographer. The addition of news and food coverage to the paper presented continued visual challenges. Matt met them head on.

Because of *Seven Days'* broad circulation area, we have long worked with freelance photographers around the state — most notably John Wallace-Broderick in central Vermont. But we finally made Matt the official staff photographer in 2004, acknowledging his dedication to the paper and the sheer magnitude of his work.

One of Mitt's projects—a suite of seven days was his "Sound Proof" collection of found photos, coordinated by Rag Heavy World. An exhibit of these images toured the state, including a stint in the Governor's Gallery. "We all owe thanks

to Matt for his ability and artfully saving for us the fondest memories of a mutual era in the "Second Proof" exhibit," says EW founder and director Jan Lockridge. As an early art director of *Seven Days*, worked with Matt on the paper. "His eye has no equal, and he shares his work with beauty and goodness."

Mutt has always had an idiosyncratic sense of composition. One challenge of shooting for a media outlet is that he's picturing "someone else's story," he says. If he were to tell his own, the photo would include (and sometimes does) information that the subject revealed to him after the session left.

The life of a newspaper photographer is not without other difficulties. Matt has blown out a knee and "had to crawl back to the car." He's been kicked out, chewed out and scolded at. Once, he got "locked in the back of a police car — that was a bummer." Turns out the officer got an emergency call while Matt was on a ride-along.

In recent years, Matt says he's enjoyed shooting for *Kids* VT. "The kids are funnier," he observes. "They're playful." Conversely, he also likes photographing "people at a state of loss," such as at refugee facilities. "When I go to someone's place, I am very respectful," he says.

As with any journalist, Matt appreciates the variety in his work. "I like that the jobs are something I never could imagine," he says. "That's like a gift."

And sometimes, an argument by thought would be dull proves to be the opposite. "My master is, this could be the best story ever," Matt says. "So why couldn't it be the best picture ever?" (2)



20 YEARS...

JANUARY 19
NEW CHIPS
pulsars.com find
small variable
Noisy on the
discussed



PLANNING 4: The 1995-96 school year was the first in which the district's 100,000 students were all in the same school year.



ABSTRACT:
Honeybees (*Apis mellifera*)
take off in a
climb that has
been described
as the
"figure-eight."

[illegible]

APRIL 5 The Washington Business Magazine named Stoner-Roth Business of the Year, citing the company's FRANCHISE 500® and 1000® and its services for the community and organizations of Washington.

• **JUNE 18**
 Forty-three
 million
 live and
 kicking
 this year
 (2000)

2007
JANUARY 22: Peter Fong is diagnosed with lymphoma and begins bleeding about his spreading tumor with a coagulation enzyme. Later he dies after all these years of self-medicating the bloody matter of an undiagnosed disease that did bleedches and the lips of a dead man along the highway of 401 in the city of Toronto. He is buried in the city of Toronto. He is buried in the city of Toronto. He is buried in the city of Toronto.



MAY 30 *Rise From* documents about labor practices in "Hill millers and forest agents and wildlife housing, showing the unseemly side of the up Chinese in Vietnam." **NAN** [30 place Twentyfour Reporting]

DECEMBER 30
Therapy ends:
Elizabeth Ciano
wins the Joffe
& Co. contract
Award for
Joffe's O'Connell
from the
Brennan's Pines
Group of 1994

DELIVERED TO
Suzanne
Friedman was
down-courtesy
without
expert Simon
Jacobson's
Shuck and
Jury 11/11
Did place, first
read 11/11/11

MARCH 18: Poles For your game this week, Inside 'Tweed Green's Days Laureates, 10. The Green Days start 10.



APRIL 26 Steve Nouri introduced the bill. Gary L. Smith, a lobbyist with the Illinois State Bar Association, testified in support of the bill. The bill passed the House 100-0.

AUGUST 22
Publishers' Reception
at Wanda's
Jazz Club
4th campus
guests for
Southwest
Aids
Disability
Special
Section



Paper Trails

Special deliveries from the Seven Days road crew

BY RAMELA POLSTON

Every week, *Seven Days*' sales team, writers, editors, designers and proofreaders race against time to put out a brand-new issue, filled with fresh content and free of charge, for our readers. But all that hard work would be for naught if we didn't have drivers to bring the product to the people.

Currently, some 16 drivers — aka "delivery technicians" — load up their cars and vans and ferry 36,000 papers to nearly 1,200 locations across central and north-eastern Vermont, as well as Pittsburgh, N.Y. Take postal workers; they're undervalued by heat or cold, drizzling downpours or winter snowstorms. And because *Seven Days*' circulation is modest, they also keep meticulous track of deliveries and returns.

The odd thing is, many of the other employees — those in sales, editorial and design — never even meet these drivers, who converse at the loading docks in a



David Ryan was one of *Seven Days*' first, freelance, full-time drivers. One day, while with Greater Luz, he was painting his gutters.

20 YEARS...

JANUARY 25 *Seven Days* launches the daily — a weekday news chronicle featuring the day's latest Vermont stories across all media.

the daily 7
on-line and mobile web

FEBRUARY 27 In an issue devoted to what is about the Vermont Future online paper joint, *Seven Days* writers discover that even having access to the print version features of checking back Vermont's only online paper (2010), and how Vermont's downtown neighbors feel about it.

MARCH 10 In Times Meeting One, *Seven Days* editors report about what's eating.

DECEMBER 6 *Seven Days* purchases Kids VT (formerly Vermont My parenting magazine). The new print combination that we are now up and being in the local justice (2010). Kids VT editor and co-publisher Susan Hickey.



APRIL 27 Morgan Jones and Margot Harman are the state of Vermont's first female judges in the state of Vermont. (2010) Photo: CTV (2010).

MAY 8 *Seven Days* is the first issue of the online paper.

2010

JANUARY The City of Burlington is the first issue of the online paper. (2010) Photo: CTV (2010).

FEBRUARY 1 *Seven Days* is the first issue of the online paper. (2010) Photo: CTV (2010).



FEBRUARY 24 *Seven Days* is the first issue of the online paper. (2010) Photo: CTV (2010).



MAY 16-22 *Seven Days* is the first issue of the online paper. (2010) Photo: CTV (2010).



NOVEMBER 17 In Times One, *Seven Days* is the first issue of the online paper. (2010) Photo: CTV (2010).



FEBRUARY 1 The first issue of the online paper. (2010) Photo: CTV (2010).



2011

Wise Women

For Seven Days' sex columnists, no question has ever been too daunting, silly or gross

BY PAMELA POLSTON



Lela No. 1
NANCY ETTEMANN-DEGREE



Lela No. 2
RUTH FOGENTZ



Mistress Moore
ALLISON DAVIS

Most newspapers that offer a relationship advice column rely on a nationally syndicated feature. *Seven Days* has been locally oriented from its beginning, and so it was only natural to hire our own advice goblins. For this 20th anniversary look back, our previously anonymous columnists have agreed to be noted.

Now we can tell you that **NANCY STRANG** created the persona of "Lola the Love Counselor" in 1995. She was a freelance writer then and is still a contributor to *Seven Days* and *Kids VT*, as well as publications around the world. Nancy is also the author of *Boys in a Jar: A Daughter's Journey Through Her Father's Memory*, and *Blags of Brainspark*. She works at the University of Vermont.

A little more than a year later, Nancy passed Lola to her associate editor **WENDY WARE**. It's testament to her sound advice over the next eight years that she'd be employed back to calling her "Rabbi Rabi." She's still a writer and lives in Providence, R.I.

After Rabi moved from Vermont, Lela retired and "Mistress Moore" was born. Or rather, she created by this adriaperson **ALLISON DAVIS**. Her sassy,

sassy persona is still the stuff of legend, at least among *Seven Days* readers and the many *Seven* readers who sought her counsel. Allison, who now lives in New York City and works in media, had to let Macy go in 2003, and encouraged us to find a new adviser. So we did. "Ask Athena" also comes from a local writer whose advice we find thoughtful and candid. "Who's she?" That's for us to know and you to find out... someday.

We asked our previous advice columnists three questions, and here's what they had to say:

What was your most memorable query?

UNRAVING: It's hard to remember! Setting the tone for the very first column stands out, though, because I had to come up with the question as well as the answer. We had to introduce the readership to Lela and what she could do for the horny and lonely. We didn't want her to be too casual, or blasé. I think the whole *Seven Days* staff (which was maybe seven people) weighed in on the tone for "Lola's debut." Likewise, a query that still bugs me is one I never answered in print. Lela received a rambling, multiple-page, handwritten letter from a teen who

detaild a history of abuse (I think by a woman). He'd been in counseling for years but didn't trust his therapist. There was no way to fit his "question" into the column's format, but I couldn't ignore him. I somehow crafted up visiting him at his home and basically telling him I had heard him. I'm not sure if that did him any good, but it managed my conscience. Sort of.

UNRAVING: So many questions had to do with and/or body hair — We readers seem really curious about both! At least one of the real questions was deemed too hot for print and was relegated to the blog. That was probably the most memorable.

Did you learn anything about sex?

UNRAVING: I learned that people were still pretty pure up to the late '90s! Their hangups ran the gamut from women asking men not to dates to how to get a reluctant man to go down on his girlfriend. I do recall my response to the latter: "Tell him that it's down or out!"

UNRAVING: What I learned about sex by doing the column was how little I knew about sex.

UNRAVING: I received very few angry letters asking me to jumpstart a stagnant sex life from leaving partners who had allowed their intimacy to dwindle into dead death. This terrified me. While it's possible to breathe life back into the bedroom, the best practice is to never let it die. That's why it's called being sexually active — you have to stay actively engaged.

Do you still give advice to friends?

UNRAVING: I do, but these days everyone does. Lola mentors for the hapless days of do-or-don'ts and answers **UNRAVING:** I sometimes give friends relationship advice, but I can't not give them or never taken it. And give sex advice? Never. Way too embarrassing to tell about.

UNRAVING: I do, but I've learned that all relationship advice boils down to the same few things, regardless of circumstances: Get clear with your partner(s) on expectations, ask for what you want, and never cheat. If you're open and honest about what you want, there should be no reason to stray — unless, of course, you mean your partner's blessing. ☺



SEPTEMBER 17 "Our Bachelors" topical column: What Master Babes Can. Sanders to have to give support for a possible presidential run. Sanders' *Seven Days* column is the first of its kind, an online newspaper of local culture, news, and entertainment. Sanders' first column is the first of its kind, an online newspaper of local culture, news, and entertainment.

FEBRUARY 20 Sanders' first column is the first of its kind, an online newspaper of local culture, news, and entertainment. Sanders' first column is the first of its kind, an online newspaper of local culture, news, and entertainment.

APRIL 10-MAY 3 Sanders' first column is the first of its kind, an online newspaper of local culture, news, and entertainment. Sanders' first column is the first of its kind, an online newspaper of local culture, news, and entertainment.

AUGUST Sanders' first column is the first of its kind, an online newspaper of local culture, news, and entertainment. Sanders' first column is the first of its kind, an online newspaper of local culture, news, and entertainment.

BERNIE beat Sanders' first column is the first of its kind, an online newspaper of local culture, news, and entertainment. Sanders' first column is the first of its kind, an online newspaper of local culture, news, and entertainment.

JULY 10 Sanders' first column is the first of its kind, an online newspaper of local culture, news, and entertainment. Sanders' first column is the first of its kind, an online newspaper of local culture, news, and entertainment.

JUNE 18 Sanders' first column is the first of its kind, an online newspaper of local culture, news, and entertainment. Sanders' first column is the first of its kind, an online newspaper of local culture, news, and entertainment.

AUGUST 5 Sanders' first column is the first of its kind, an online newspaper of local culture, news, and entertainment. Sanders' first column is the first of its kind, an online newspaper of local culture, news, and entertainment.

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DECEMBER 12 Sanders' first column is the first of its kind, an online newspaper of local culture, news, and entertainment. Sanders' first column is the first of its kind, an online newspaper of local culture, news, and entertainment.

NOVEMBER 25 Sanders' first column is the first of its kind, an online newspaper of local culture, news, and entertainment. Sanders' first column is the first of its kind, an online newspaper of local culture, news, and entertainment.

APRIL 10 Sanders' first column is the first of its kind, an online newspaper of local culture, news, and entertainment. Sanders' first column is the first of its kind, an online newspaper of local culture, news, and entertainment.

JUNE 18 Sanders' first column is the first of its kind, an online newspaper of local culture, news, and entertainment. Sanders' first column is the first of its kind, an online newspaper of local culture, news, and entertainment.

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SEVEN DAYS



SO\50 HINDSIGHT

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